

# **Description**

## **BASKETBALL TRAINING APPARATUS**

### **CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/319,372, filed July 1, 2003.

### **BACKGROUND OF INVENTION**

#### **FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] The present invention generally relates to sports training equipment and techniques. More particularly, this invention relates to a basketball training apparatus configured to assist the user in improving his or her shooting skills and accuracy on all playing levels.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART**

[0003]

Various basketball training equipment has been proposed, examples of which include U.S. Patent No. 3,941,382 to Clark and U.S. Patent No. 5,928,094 to Sagedahl. Clark discloses a game that makes use of a number of marking elements held together in a single row with straps. With the straps, the marking elements are aligned to extend radially out from beneath a basketball rim so that a scoring system is established based on a point value associated with each marking element.

Sagedahl discloses a U-shaped clip that attaches to the rim of a

basketball hoop. The clip is preferably a different color than the hoop and is intended to help align a shot made by a player.

## **SUMMARY OF INVENTION**

[0004] The present invention provides a basketball training apparatus designed to improve shooting skills and accuracy on all playing levels, e.g., from elementary to professional. The basketball training apparatus is adapted for use with a basketball rim placed above a playing surface, and comprises a base on the playing surface beneath the basketball rim, a plurality of arms extending in radial directions from the base, a plurality of shooting markers spaced apart along the length of each arm, and at least one member attached to the basketball rim and comprising vision markers. Each vision marker is radially aligned with a corresponding one of the arms. With this arrangement, a user, when standing on one of the shooting markers and facing the basketball rim, is provided with visual shooting assistance as a result of the arm being radially aligned with one of the vision markers located on a region of basketball rim that is nearest the user, and therefore readily visible to the user.

[0005] Other objects and advantages of this invention will be better appreciated from the following detailed description.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS**

[0006] Figure 1 shows a plan view of the basketball training apparatus in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

[0007] Figure 2 shows a front edge view of a basketball rim equipped with visual markers in accordance with the invention.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0008] A plan view of basketball training apparatus 10 in accordance with an embodiment of this invention is shown in Figure 1. The apparatus 10 is adapted to be used in conjunction with a conventional basketball playing area, including a basketball rim 12 mounted to a backboard 14. The apparatus 10 comprises a base 20 placed directly beneath the basketball rim 12 on a suitable playing surface 16. In a preferred embodiment, the apparatus 10 further includes arms 22 (five in Figure 1) extending radially from the base 20, shooting markers 24 located along the lengths of the arms 22 to identify locations from which a user shoots a basketball toward the rim 12, and vision markers 26 attached to the rim 12 and radially aligned with each of the arms 22. Each arm 22 is preferably formed of one or more individual straps 32. If an arm is formed of multiple straps 32, the straps 32 can be placed between shooting markers 24 and aligned to define the arm 22 as shown. The straps 32 are preferably of different lengths, e.g., six feet, fourteen feet and twenty feet, so that the arms 22 can be sized and the shooting markers 24 readily located for short, midrange and three-point shooting practice, respectively. Each shooting marker 24 preferably includes foot imprints 28 that assist in proper foot placement when shooting. Arrows 30 are preferably formed or placed on each of the arms 22, pointing toward the base 20.

[0009] At least some and preferably all of the components of the apparatus 10 have indicia that are color-coded to promote the shooter's vision, direction and accuracy. For example, each vision marker 26 is preferably the same color as the arm 22 with which it is aligned, and/or the same color as the shooting markers 24 (or the foot imprints 28 thereof) on the arm 22 with which it is aligned, and/or the same color as the arrows 30 on the arm 22 with which it is aligned. While color coding is preferred, it is foreseeable that some other visual indicia could be used to distinguish the vision markers 26 and associate the markers 26 with their respective arms 22 or arm components.

[0010] In use, the base 20 is placed directly beneath the basketball rim 12, and the arms 22 are arranged to extend radially outward from the base 20. The base 20 is preferably round and formed of a nonmaterial, such as rubber matting. By constructing the arms 20 of individual straps 32, the lengths of the arms 22 can be varied, e.g., distances from the base 20 corresponding to the free throw line, a corner shot, the three range, medium shot range, short shot range, etc. The arms 22 can be attached to the base 20 and the shooting markers 24 with Velcro or any other releasable or permanent attachment means. The shooting markers 24 are preferably detachable to allow the user to focus on specific shooting areas. As with the base 20, the shooting markers 24 are preferably round and formed of a nonmaterial (e.g., rubber matting), and serve to give the shooter a spot-up position.

[0011] The vision markers 26 are preferably in a form that can be releasably

attached to the rim 12. For example, the vision markers 26 may be in the form of separate plastic clips that individually mount to the rim 12 as shown in Figure 1, or in the form of separate plastic clips that individually mount to a tube 34 as shown in Figure 2, or in the form of colored sections of the tube 34 shown in Figure 2. To provide for releasable attachment, the markers 26 (e.g., clips) or the tube 34 to which the markers 26 are mounted preferably have a C-shaped cross-section. Alternatively, the markers 26 could be in the form of Velcro straps, which may be more durable and easily replaceable than a tube or individual plastic clips. Because the vision markers 26 are located on the rim 12 in positions corresponding to radials defined by the arms 22, and therefore on the near edge of the rim 12 nearest the shooter, each marker 26 provides a readily visible focal point to improve vision, shooting technique and accuracy. As such, the apparatus 10 enables a shooter to spot up on a color-coded shooting marker 24 located on one of the arms 22, and then shoot in the radial direction defined by the arm 22 (preferably of the same color) toward the corresponding vision marker 26 of the same color as the shooting marker 24.

[0012]

While the invention has been described in terms of a particular embodiment, it is apparent that other forms could be adopted by one skilled in the art. For example, the apparatus could differ in appearance and construction from the embodiment shown in the Figures, and appropriate materials could be substituted for those noted. Accordingly, it should be understood that the invention is not limited to the specific

embodiment illustrated in the Figures. It should also be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed above are for the purpose of disclosing the illustrated embodiment, and do not necessarily serve as limitations to the scope of the invention. Therefore, the scope of the invention is to be limited only by the following claims.